

2007 COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

**The Evansville Metropolitan Planning
Organization**

Adopted June 2007



Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan
Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization

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Introduction

Public transportation is a crucial element in the lives of thousands of people in the Evansville Metropolitan Area and an essential part of the social fabric and local economy. For some low-income and poverty, elderly, and disabled individuals, public transportation is the primary means for accessing essential services, including medical care, social services, essential retail needs (such as grocery store and pharmacies), government offices and educational facilities. Just as critically, public transportation provides a vital link for those individuals without access to a personal vehicle to reach employment and job-training opportunities. Public transportation fills the essential need for access to entry level employment.

Human service transportation includes a broad range of transportation services' options designed to meet the needs of a variety of populations. Choices may include the public transit fixed route systems, taxi vouchers, paratransits, and non-profit organizations. While it is useful that a variety of options exist, the resulting system can be confusing and rigid. The results can be an inefficient use of vehicles and staff and confused riders unaware or unable to understand the choices available to them.

Federal, state, and local governments, private and public non-profit organizations, and commercial operators must recognize the importance of public transportation services for low income, elderly and disabled individuals. The recognition must be seen as real and tangible by offering both financial support and assistance in the delivery of actual transportation services.

The Federal Government has made it a clear priority for local organizations to improve transportation coordination for low income, elderly and disabled populations in order to remove the barriers between those individuals and the services necessary to help them maintain productive and independent lives. One obstacle of efforts to improve social services and employment opportunities has been the lack of effective coordination between public transit providers, employers and human service program providers.

In the Federal transportation bill passed on August 10, 2005 (the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, or SAFETEA-LU), Congress established a new requirement for the funding of projects under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Special Needs of Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) (5316), and New Freedom (5317) programs.

The requirement is that the designated recipients of these grants approve funding for only those projects that are derived from a locally developed, Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (hereafter called the Coordinated Plan). The actions or strategies developed to fill the needs identified in the Coordinated Plan will be included in the Transportation Improvement Program.

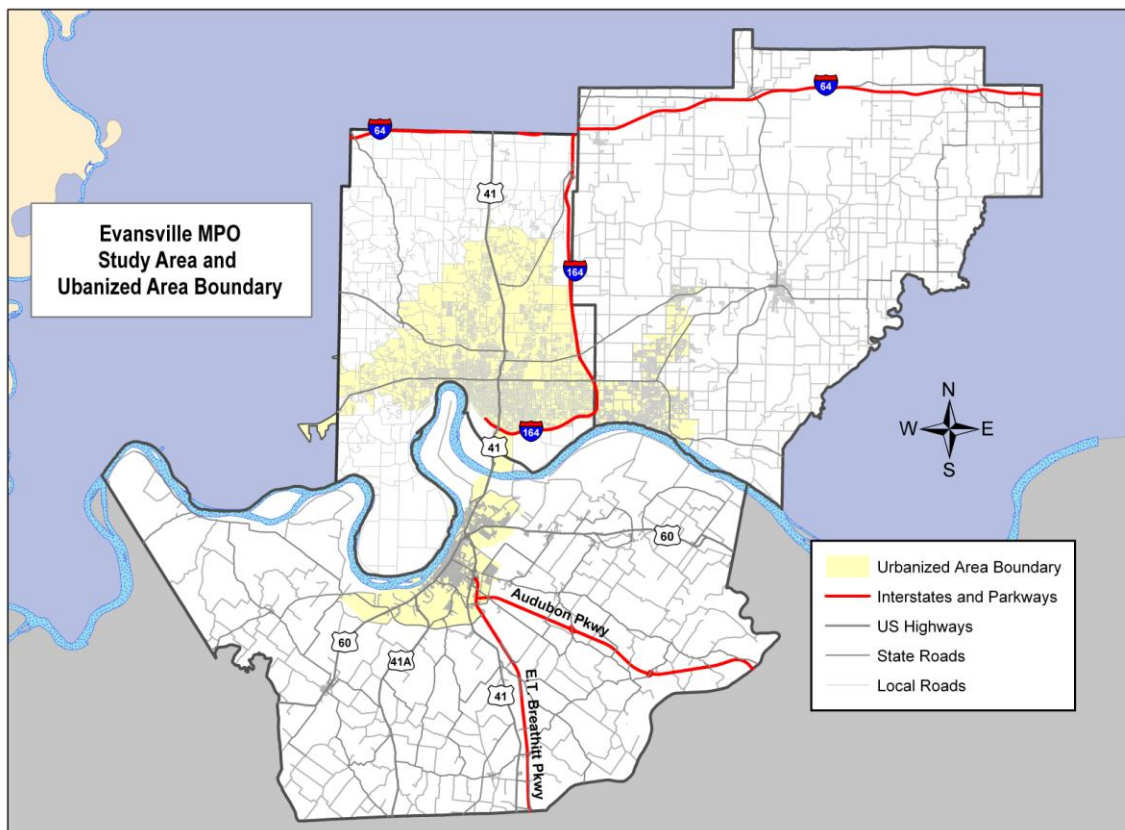
The goal of the Coordinated Plan is to aid in the creation of collaborative transit services for the targeted populations in a region by helping to direct funding for projects that maximize the area-wide established goals and eliminate overlapping in transportation services. The targeted populations are those transportation dependant individuals having inadequate access to private vehicles or those unable to operate private vehicles.

Those most likely to fit that description are the elderly, those with low incomes, and the disabled.

The Coordinated Plan is on a minimum four-year cycle but may be amended and improved on as more entities and individuals participate and work to improve existing transportation coordination.

This Coordinated Plan was developed through a process that included consultation through public meetings (Exhibit A and Exhibit B) with representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers, as well as the public. It also includes the results of three surveys. One survey (Exhibit C) was completed by 625 transit and human services' users. The second survey (Exhibit D) was completed by 17 human services organizations representing 40,436 clients. The third survey (Exhibit E) was completed by 42 transit and human services' users.

The Coordinated Plan covers the Evansville Metropolitan Study Area, which consists of Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties in Indiana and Henderson County in Kentucky.



Organization of the Coordinated Plan

The Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization (EMPO) will include the recommended elements, as well as general recommendations for the organization and content of the Coordinated Plan which was published in the Federal Register. The Coordinated Plan will include the following elements:

- An assessment of available services for individuals with disabilities, elderly, and persons with low income or in poverty that identifies current providers (public, private, and nonprofit).
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and persons with low income or in poverty.
- Strategies and/or activities to address the identified gaps in services and coordinated actions to eliminate or reduce duplication in services and strategies for more efficient utilization of resources.

Section One is a summary of the three grant programs (Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317) the Coordinated Plan involves.

Section Two is a list of currently available transportation services for the populations identified previously. In addition, section two presents an overview of the region's demographic distributions for the elderly, disabled, and low income.

Section Three describes the activities that promoted public and community involvement in the creation and continued development of the Coordinated Plan.

Section Four summarizes existing gaps/needs in transportation services and lists the strategies/activities and priorities to address the identified gaps in service. In addition, it prioritizes the implementation of the strategies and activities.

Section 1. Grant Program Overview

There are three grant programs that the Coordinated Plan will encompass. They share the similar goal of increasing mobility for targeted populations.

- Section 5310 applies only to mobility services for the elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Section 5316 targets welfare recipients, those in poverty and/or low income persons (low income is 150% of poverty. In 2007 for a family of 4 that was \$30,975 and below).
- Section 5317 targets services for people with disabilities.
- Sections 5310 and 5317 apply to general mobility in addition to job related transportation.
- Section 5316 is limited to services that develop and maintain job access and job related transportation.

Assistance to the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Program (Section 5310)

The Section 5310 program provides funds for capital projects for transportation services designed to meet the special transportation needs of the elderly and the disabled in all areas (urbanized, small urban, and rural). In Indiana, the current designated recipient for the Section 5310 Program is the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). INDOT evaluates and grants Section 5310 to sub recipients statewide. The EMPO assists the INDOT in this evaluation and granting process.

The United States Congress establishes the allocation levels for the Section 5310 Program through a formula based on the population of elderly and disabled in a State. Section 5310 Program funds are available to private non-profit organizations, or public bodies the State approves to coordinate services for the elderly and persons with disabilities, or public bodies which certify to the Governor that no non-profit organizations or associations are readily available in an area to provide the service. Local public bodies eligible to apply for Section 5310 funds as coordinators of services for elderly persons and the disabled are those that the State designates to coordinate human service activities in a particular area.

Section 5310 Program Federal funds can fund no more than 80% of the total eligible capital and program administrative costs for approved projects. There is an exception to this ratio for vehicle related equipment required by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Federal share is 90% for vehicle related equipment required by CAAA or ADA. Only the incremental cost of the equipment required by the ADA or CAAA may be funded at 90%, not the entire cost of the vehicle, even if the vehicle is purchased for use in services required by the ADA or CAAA.

Section 5310 Program funds are available for capital expenses to support the provision of transportation services to meet the special needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Examples of capital expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- Vehicles
- Radios
- Vehicle shelters
- Wheelchair lifts and restraints
- Vehicle rehabilitation, manufacture, or overhaul
- Preventative maintenance, defined as all maintenance costs
- Extended warranties which do not exceed the industry standard
- Microcomputer hardware and software
- Initial component installation costs
- Vehicle procurement, testing, inspection and acceptance costs
- Lease of equipment when lease is more cost effective than purchase
- Acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other arrangement
- The introduction of new technology, through innovative and improved products, into mass transportation
- Transit related intelligent transportation systems

The INDOT Public Transit Section manages the Section 5310 Program for the State.

The following are amounts received by the State of Indiana:

Federal Fiscal Year 2006 - \$2,281,514

Federal Fiscal Year 2007 - \$2,413,518

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program (Section 5316)

The JARC Program was created to support the development and maintenance of job access and job related transportation services for welfare recipients and eligible low income individuals (150% of poverty level and below). The designated recipient for the JARC program is the EMPO. The EMPO will be responsible for grants through a competitive application process. For communities or areas in Indiana with populations under 200,000, INDOT is the JARC Program manager and will select all sub recipients for projects in those areas.

The United States Congress allocates JARC funds based on a formula apportioned by the population of welfare recipients and low income individuals. Nationally, approximately 60% of JARC funds go to designated recipients in urbanized areas with populations over 200,000, 20% goes to states for urbanized areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 and 20% goes to states for non-urbanized areas. JARC funds may be transferred between urbanized areas with less than 200,000 in population and non-urbanized areas when the Governor certifies that all of the JARC objectives have been met in the area from which funds are to be transferred.

JARC Program Federal funds can be used for 80% of capital expenses, 50% of operating expenses, and up to 10% of the apportionment available for planning,

administration, and technical assistance. Non-U.S. Department of Transportation Federal funds may be used as matching funds if the funds permit their use for transportation.

JARC Program funds are available for transportation services provided by public, non-profit or private-for-profit operators. JARC Program funding assistance may be provided for a variety of transportation services and strategies that are directed at addressing welfare recipient's and eligible low income individual's transportation needs. Examples of the types of projects that may use JARC funds include, but are not limited to:

- Developing new or expanded transportation projects or services that provide access to employment opportunities
- Promoting public transportation by low income workers, including the use of public transportation by workers with non-traditional work schedules
- Promoting the use of transit vouchers for welfare recipients and eligible low income individuals
- Promoting the use of employer provided transportation, including the transit pass benefit program under section 132 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
- Subsidizing the costs associated with adding reverse commute bus, train, carpool, van routes, or service from urbanized areas and other than urbanized areas to suburban workplaces
- Subsidizing the purchase or lease by a non-profit organization or public agency of a van or bus dedicated to shuttling employees from their residences to a suburban workplace
- Facilitating public transportation services to suburban employment opportunities

JARC capital funds may be used for "mobility management". FTA defines mobility management as consisting of short range planning and management activities for projects for improving coordination among public transportation and other transportation services providers carried out by a recipient or sub recipient through an agreement entered into with a person, including a government entity, under this section (other than sections 5309 and 5320), but excluding operating public transportation services. Mobility management activities may not be used for the direct provision and operation of coordinated transportation services, including the scheduling, dispatching and monitoring of vehicles. FTA proposes the following as eligible mobility management services:

- The development of coordinated plans
- The support of State and local coordination policy bodies and councils
- The maintenance and operation of transportation brokerages to coordinate providers, funding agencies and customers.
- The development and maintenance of other transportation coordination bodies and their activities, including employer oriented Transportation Management Organizations, human services organizations customer oriented travel navigator systems and neighborhood travel coordination activities
- The development and support of one stop transportation traveler call centers to coordinate transportation information on all travel modes and to manage eligibility requirements and arrangements for customers among supporting programs
- The acquisition of intelligent transportation technologies to help plan and operate coordinated systems inclusive of Global Information Systems (GIS) mapping, coordinated vehicle scheduling, dispatching and monitoring technologies as well

as technologies to track costs and billing in a coordinated system and single smart customer pay systems

The following are amounts received by the Evansville Urbanized Area for JARC:

Federal Fiscal Year 2006 - \$99,338

Federal Fiscal Year 2007 - \$104,713

2007 income guidelines showing 150% of poverty:

Family Size:	Family Income must be Below:
One	\$15,315
Two	\$20,535
Three	\$25,755
Four	\$30,975
Five	\$36,195
Six	\$41,415
Seven	\$46,636
Eight	\$51,855

For family units of more than 8 members, add \$3,480 for each additional member.

New Freedom Program (Section 5317)

The New Freedom Program is designed to provide improved transportation services and public transportation alternatives for people with disabilities. These services must extend beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. FTA defines services beyond the ADA requirements to mean services not specifically required in the ADA and Department of Transportation regulations. Services funded through the New Freedom Program must be in compliance with the ADA. New Freedom includes, but is not limited to, job related transportation services.

Nationally, approximately 60% of New Freedom funds go to designated recipients in urbanized area with populations over 200,000, 20% goes to states for urbanized areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000, and 20% goes to states for non urbanized areas. INDOT is responsible for management of the New Freedom funds allocated to areas with populations under 200,000. EMPO will manage the New Freedom Program for the Evansville Metropolitan Area.

New Freedom Program funds can cover 80% of capital expenses, 50% of operating expenses and 100% of up to 10% of the apportionment available for planning, administration, and technical assistance. Non DOT Federal funds may be used as matching funds, if they permit their use for transportation.

New Freedom Program funds may be used for public transportation services and alternatives, beyond those required by the ADA, which assist individuals with disabilities.

Examples of projects and activities that may be funded include, but are not limited to:

- Purchasing vehicles and supporting accessible taxi, ride sharing and van pooling programs
- Providing paratransit services beyond minimum requirements (3/4 mile to either side of a fixed route), including for routes that run seasonally
- Making accessibility improvements to transit and intermodal stations not designated as key stations
- Supporting voucher programs for transportation services offered by human service providers
- Supporting volunteer driver and aide programs
- Supporting mobility management and coordination programs among public transportation providers and other human service agencies that provide transportation

New Freedom Program funds may be used only to provide new public transportation services and/or public transportation alternatives that assist persons with disabilities. New Freedom capital funds may be used for “mobility management”. New Freedom funds are available to state or local governmental entities, non-profit organizations or operators of public transportation services (including private for profit operators).

The following are amounts received by the Evansville Urbanized Area for New Freedom:

Federal Fiscal Year 2006 - \$59,544

Federal Fiscal Year 2007 - \$68,566

Section 2. Existing Services

Demographic Data

The EMPO used demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau and STATS Indiana for information related to age, disability, income and unemployment. For this plan, the EMPO used Census Bureau definitions from the 2000 Census.

According to the Census Bureau, an elderly person is defined as any individual 65 years or older. Disability is defined as persons, five years or older, who reported themselves as having a long term physical, sensory, mental or self care disability. Also, it includes anyone 5 years or older who reported they had difficulty leaving their home because of a physical, sensory, mental, or self care disability and anyone between the ages of 16 and 64 who reported having difficulty working because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition that lasted 6 months or more was considered disabled. For economic status, JARC states that the program is targeted to aid welfare recipients or low income individuals. However, due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate data, the EMPO uses the poverty status category in the development of the Coordinated Plan. This information is readily available in the Census information. Unemployment was defined as any civilian individual aged 16 years or older who does not have a job or is not waiting to be rehired for a job from which he or she was recently laid off.

Evansville-Henderson, IN-KY MSA Demographics

The Evansville-Henderson, IN-KY MSA consist of Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson and Posey Counties in Indiana, and Henderson and Webster Counties in Kentucky. The total population in the Evansville-Henderson, IN-KY Metropolitan Statistical Area in 2000 was 296,195 up 17,205 persons or 6.2% from 1990. However, the counties that make up the Urbanized Area and are included in this Coordinated Plan are Vanderburgh, Warrick and Henderson. The numbers below are only for these three counties affected by the Coordinated Plan.

Total Population:

YEAR	VANDERBURGH	WARRICK	HENDERSON	TOTAL	PERCENT INCREASE
1980	167,515	41,474	40,849	249,838	
1990	165,058	44,920	43,044	253,022	1.27%
2000	171,922	52,383	44,829	269,134	6.36%
2005	173,187	56,362	45,573	275,122	2.22%

Per Capita Personal Income

Per Capita Personal Income is the most commonly used tool employed by economists to measure a region or county's economic strength. **Below are 2004 figures:**

- Vanderburgh County - \$32,926
- Warrick County - \$32,265
- Henderson County - \$27,098
- United States - \$33,050

Commuting

According to the 2000 Census, 1,003 persons, 1.2% of the total labor force over the age of 16 in Vanderburgh County use public transportation, not including taxis, to reach their place of employment. In Warrick County it is 53 persons, .02% and in Henderson County it is 124 persons, .06%.

A tool to show that urban sprawl is occurring and is forcing more people to spend commuting time in their vehicles to reach their place of employment is the mean travel time to work provided by the Census Bureau. In 1990, the Urbanized Area average commute time was 18.87 minutes. In 2000, the Urbanized Area average commute time was 20.73 minutes. The Indiana average was 22.5 minutes and the U.S. average was 25 minutes.

No Vehicle

According to the 2000 Census there were 7,440 households, 10.5% of total households, in Vanderburgh County with no personal vehicle available to them. In Warrick County there were 582 households, 3% of total households, and in Henderson County there were 1,586 households, 8.8% of total households, with no personal vehicle available to them. In total, there were 9,608 households, approximately 8.9% of total households, with no personal vehicle available to them.

Below are 2005 Census Bureau estimates for specific groups in the three county Urbanized Area:

Elderly

The total number of persons aged 65 and over in the three county Urbanized Area was 37,889. This is 13.7% of the total population. That is higher than the 12.1% rate for the U.S. In the Urbanized Area, it is projected that by the year 2040, the number of elderly will increase 60% to approximately 60,000 persons. The percentage of elderly in the total population will jump to 21.5%.

Disability

There were 50,745 persons who identified themselves as disabled. This is 18.4% of the total population. That is slightly lower than the 19.4% for the U.S. Nationally, only 60% of people between the ages of 16 and 64 with disabilities are employed.

Unemployed and Poverty

There were approximately 7,022 unemployed persons. That is 5.2% of the total civilian labor force over 16 years old of 135,044. There were 29,031 individuals identified as in poverty. This is 10.8% of the total population. That is lower than the 12.4% rate for the U.S. In the 1998 METS survey, it was estimated that about 70% of METS riders were living in poverty. Also, when respondents were asked if a private car was available for the bus ride, 88% said no and only 12% said yes.

Existing Public Transit and Human Service Transportation Providers

The *2005 Annual Report on Indiana Public Transit* contains summaries of existing public transit systems throughout the State, in addition to an annual review of public transit programs and services. The report also listed Section 5310 transportation providers and other transit partners throughout the State.

The United Way of Southwestern Indiana maintains a list and funds a number of social service organizations, including those with their own transportation services. Also, social service organizations maintain additional information on potential transportation services for the elderly, disabled and low income persons. The United Way's list of agencies and services was the initial source used by the EMPO to contact organizations interested in participating in the creation of the Coordinated Plan. The EMPO searched in the phone book and on the internet for additional organizations pertinent to this process. Also, a series of meetings helped in the compilation of organizations.

Providers of Transportation Services:

INDIANA

Metropolitan Evansville Transit System

Evansville is served by the Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS). METS provides fixed route and demand response services. It serves the City of Evansville with a population of 121,582. The service runs Monday through Saturday from 5:45 a.m. to 12:15 a.m. and provides 236 hours of service a day. The base fare is \$1 and 75 cents for youth and 50 cents for the elderly. METS has 47 vehicles. Ridership for 2005 was 1,661,303. Total vehicle miles in 2005 was 1,468,871.

Historically, the majority of METS riders have been transit dependant. This means that METS has not attracted people to ride the transit service who have a vehicle available for their use. Strategies to capture more riders of choice need to be identified and implemented. In past ridership surveys, riders generally gave METS high marks in evaluating the transit system. METS is dependent upon four sources for its funding. These sources are the City of Evansville, State of Indiana, Federal Funds and fare box and charter revenue.

Also, METS has a service, METS Connection, which enables residents of underserved areas access to service through a "door-to-transit" connection. When a passenger needs transit service, he/she telephones METS Connection and a van is dispatched to his residence or other pick-up point. The van takes the passenger to the nearest transfer station to board the bus to his destination.

METS also provides METS Mobility for \$2 and ADA Convenience Fare for \$3. There are two types of "ADA Paratransit" eligibility:

Unconditional - this eligibility is granted if a disability prevents an individual from using fixed route services for any trips that need to be taken.

Conditional - this eligibility is granted if an individual can use fixed route service under certain circumstances, but needs van service for certain trips.

Passengers of this elderly and disabled transportation service are required to make a trip reservation one day in advance.

Evansville ARC

ARC Industries provides employment to over 200 individuals with developmental disabilities. Evansville ARC (EARC) provides transportation to and from work for many of these individuals, as well as transportation to off-site locations. EARC provides transportation for individuals attending its Adult Day Program and its Connections for Life Program. EARC provides transportation primarily to their clientele. Most of the transportation they provide is for ambulatory clients, although they do have some wheelchair accessible vehicles. Of their 13 vehicle fleet, they operate 10 vans every weekday and have 3 additional vans used as back up.

Aurora

Homeless' services provider offers rides to homeless individuals for work and social service related transportation needs.

Community Acton Program of Evansville (CAPE)

This human service agency provides school bus transportation for children enrolled in Head Start. They have vans and a shuttle bus. CAPE does not currently have transportation services for disabled or elderly persons.

Easter Seal Rehabilitation Center

The Rehabilitation Center provides transportation services to 66 disabled clients. Their fleet consists of 5 modified vans and 1 small transit vehicle. Vehicles covered a total of 90,629 miles.

American Medical Response

Provide wheelchair transportation services targeted at helping those unable to use other existing resources such as public transit, to access medical services. Provide transportation services for medical emergencies.

Veterans Administration Evansville Clinic

Provide transportation services for military veterans.

Comaier Boone Wheelchair Transportation

Provide private for pay transportation services for the disabled.

Evansville ARC

Provide transportation services using ambulatory vans and two wheelchair accessible minivans for the developmentally disabled.

River City Yellow Cab Company

Provide private for pay transportation services.

Warrick County Council on Aging

Provide transportation services for Medicaid recipients.

Southern Indiana Resource Solutions (Warrick County)

Provide transportation services for Medicaid recipients. Also, provide private pay, on-demand services to the general public and a “fixed route” for individuals with disabilities receiving services for SIRS’ Warrick County day services program.

Providers of Transportation Services:**KENTUCKY****Henderson Area Rapid Transit**

Henderson, Kentucky is served by the Henderson Area Rapid Transit System (HART). HART has five bus routes. Four fixed routes provide 30 minute service and one fixed route provides 60 minute service. Routes start from 6 am to 7 am and end from 4 pm to 5:15 pm. Base fare is 50 cents, fares for students, children under six, elderly, and disabled is 25 cents. HART ridership in 2004 was approximately 115,000. HART also provides individuals with disabilities a demand-response transportation service. Two demand-response vehicles provide service to the City of Henderson.

Henderson Yellow Cab Company

Provide private for pay transportation services.

Henderson Checker Cab Company

Provide private for pay transportation services.

Audubon Area Community Service - Henderson**Headstart of Henderson****Green River Comprehensive Care - Henderson****Human Services’ Organizations Providing Tokens or Vouchers:**

- Southwestern Indiana Regional Council on Aging (SWIRCA)
- Vanderburgh County Health Department
- Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA)
- Evansville Coalition for the Homeless’ Community Health Center
- Outreach Ministries
- Carver Community Organization
- Evansville Association for the Blind
- Aurora

Section 3. Public Involvement

In order to ensure public participation, the EMPO contacted transportation providers and human services' providers by mail on February 2, 2007 and encouraged them to provide to their clients a survey which was prepared by the EMPO. This additional method to reach populations who might be unwilling or unable to attend a series of meetings proved successful. The EMPO received 625 completed surveys. In addition, a second transportation survey was created by the EMPO for human service providers and transportation organizations to complete based on their knowledge and experience serving low income, disabled and elderly populations. This also proved to be a successful method of public participation. Seventeen surveys were returned to EMPO representing 40,436 clients served by human service providers. A third survey completed by 42 users of public transit and human services, asked them to prioritize the community's needs.

The surveys and information regarding the development of the Coordinated Plan was posted on the EMPO website, www.evansvillempo.com.

The Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization held two public meetings. These meetings assisted greatly in the creation of this Coordinated Plan.

The first meeting hosted by the EMPO was held on February 13, 2007. Forty five social service provider organizations and transportation provider organizations were invited. The meeting was attended by 14 agencies. Staff of the EMPO handed out informational material on the Coordinated Plan and the 5310, 5316, 5317 Federal Programs. Discussions covered the required elements of the Coordinated Plan.

The second meeting hosted by the EMPO was held on March 27, 2007 in which 46 social service provider organizations and transportation provider organizations were invited. The meeting was attended by 12 people representing 11 agencies and two citizens. Staff of the EMPO handed out the results of the Users' Survey and a list of Providers of Transportation Services. The group was asked to discuss the results of the survey and asked to review the list of providers of transportation services and provide additional input. Also, the EMPO distributed a survey designed to rank the community's transportation needs. Attendees were asked to distribute the survey as widely as possible.

EMPO staff attended meetings of the Partners in Caring Committee on February 22, 2007 and March 22, 2007. Partners In Caring is a committee sponsored by the United Way consisting of social services agencies serving low income individuals. Currently, Partners in Caring is studying the challenges low income individuals have regarding transportation and social services coordination. Partners In Caring is interested in the process and goals of the Coordinated Plan. This group, along with others, has shown interest in collaborating with the EMPO as the Plan evolves.

The United Way of Southwestern Indiana produced a 2004-2005 Regional Needs Assessment. With 982 responses to a survey, lack of transportation for the elderly and disabled ranked 65 of 104 and was classified as nearly "somewhat critical". Lack of public transportation ranked 82 of 104 and was classified also as nearly "somewhat critical".

In 2003, Southwestern Indiana Council of Aging, conducted a survey to determine the elderly priority of services needed, transportation rated seventh out of the eleventh identified services. Transportation was identified as one of highest unmet needs in all 11 counties in southwestern Indiana.

The EMPO surveys and public meetings revealed some interesting facts. First, a majority, 52%, of transportation and human services' users were classified as in poverty. Second, 56% classified themselves as disabled. Third, 82% of respondents who did not have a vehicle, reported that they had frequently or occasionally missed an appointment due to a lack of transportation. Fourth, those classified as disabled were the most likely group to miss an appointment at 57% followed closely by those in poverty at 53%. Fifth, for those without a personal vehicle, the Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) is the most used mode of transportation at 94% followed by family or friends at 77% and from social services' organizations at 28%. A summary of the results of the surveys is a part of this document.

The results of the survey clearly showed the need for public and private transit. For those in poverty, it is the main option to get to work, shop, and access needed human services' providers. The large percentage of respondents missing appointments clearly shows a less than perfect system currently in place. However, public transit such as METS and HART can only do so much to address this need. Non profit, human services' organizations have an opportunity to serve their clients as well as the community. These organizations could collaborate and pool both financial and personnel resources and provide a valuable service to address an underserved need.

Section 4. Gaps, Needs, Priorities and Strategies

The Evansville area's transportation needs for the elderly, low income and disabled individuals have been determined by a number of sources. First, the EMPO conducted two surveys and two public meetings. Second, the United Way 2004-2005 Regional Needs Assessment. Third, the 1998 METS Needs Assessment produced by Bernardin Lochmueller & Associates. Fourth, the 2006 HART passenger survey conducted by the EMPO.

Comments from the surveys and the public meetings held by the Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Coordinated Plan indicate various needs for different targeted groups.

In 2006, the Evansville MPO conducted an on board passenger survey for HART. A total of 227 surveys were collected system-wide for the survey. A majority of the ridership is unemployed, makes less than \$9,999 dollars a year, does not have a driver's license or does not have a vehicle in the household. Recommendations were to:

- Modify three existing routes (College, East End and North)
- Create a route for the new Wal-mart
- Serve the Red Banks Nursing Home
- Continue providing service to the Audubon Village Shopping Center
- Explore the possibility of expanding service later in the evening
- Explore the possibility of providing service on Sundays
- Allow passengers to purchase a monthly pass that offers unlimited rides at a reduced monthly rate
- Contact local employers and encourage them to purchase transit passes for their workers
- Be more aggressive at installing bus shelters at key location along routes and at major trip generators
- Look into purchasing low-floor buses in order to better accommodate senior citizens and individuals with disabilities

In 1998, METS and the City of Evansville commissioned a transit needs assessment. The assessment identified needs and made recommendations to address those needs. Recommendations were to:

- Expand evening services on six routes
- Implement METS Connection Service
- Restructure service along Green River Road to connect more directly to the Lawndale and Eastland mall transit centers
- Integrate the trolleys into the regular bus routes
- Extend Stringtown Road route to North Park Shopping Center at all times
- Reconfigure Oak Hill Road service to be rerouted via Lynch and Green River Roads to Eastland Transfer Terminal
- Explore employer-based transportation options

Although there appeared to be a need for a Sunday services according to the rider survey, the community wide survey indicates weak demand overall in the community. At the time, the estimated net increase in subsidy was \$130,000.

There are a number of barriers that affect the public transportation needs of the disabled, low income, and elderly individuals. These barriers include, but are not limited to, public transportation's hours of operation, service areas and service availability.

Hours of Operations

- **No Sunday service**
- **Limited Saturday service**
- **No service on major holidays**
- **Limited or no service for off peak or irregular schedule workers**

The hours of operations most affect individuals who are low income and in poverty who rely on public transportation to reach their place of employment. Many jobs available to that population may not fit the traditional 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule. Besides costly taxi service, an individual who misses a bus has limited options to arrive at work on time. Human services organizations have limited staffing and vehicles available for irregular schedules.

As long as this segment of the workforce has limited access to employment opportunities they will have a disadvantage competing for employment.

Service Areas

- **Areas not served by public transit**
- **Areas not served by public paratransit**
- **Limited service outside City of Evansville and City of Henderson**

As the populations of Evansville and Henderson remains steady or have negative growth, and the unincorporated areas in Vanderburgh, Warrick and Henderson grow, many destinations creep farther and farther away from the populations who are most dependant on public transportation. Thus, although these populations reside in the same older areas, their places of employment, shopping, and medical care are increasingly difficult to reach. Transportation options for individuals to get to the far north side or eastside of Evansville and beyond, lags behind the commercial growth in those areas. Human services organizations may serve areas not served by METS or HART, but their service is limited in scope and may not be available to all of those in need.

There is limited regional public transportation or adjoining county public transportation. Many times, individuals dependant on public transportation can not work at a job outside a service area.

Service Availability

- **Frequency of service**
- **Accessibility to transit routes (both in distance and mobility issues)**

- **Limited service outside incorporated area**

The frequency of service creates difficulties for individuals trying to reach employment or appointments. METS and HART operate 30 and 60 minute bus routes. Comments from the public meetings and the surveys noted that a trip from the northside or westside of Evansville to the eastside may take over an hour. Long trip durations place a burden on riders as they attempt to arrive at work or appointments on time.

Human services organizations provide specific trip types, which may limit their ability to provide transportation to others who do not fall into the categories in which they serve. For example, an agency who serves the disabled may not be able to serve low income individuals due to a restriction on use of funds and/or the agency mission statement. However, agencies with similar needs may be able to “share” a vehicle or resources.

Framework for Competitive Selection Process

Projects funded through the JARC and New Freedom programs will be selected competitively. The Coordinated Plan will serve as a blueprint for funding projects through Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317. Selection criteria will be based on many factors. Some of those factors for competitive proposals are:

- Responsiveness to the needs and strategies in the Coordinated Plan
- Demonstrates coordination
- Innovative idea that is feasible
- Number of people served
- Evidence of local financial support
- Strategies for on-going funding

As this process evolves, the EMPO will continue to work with the stakeholders in the community to develop an evaluation process to encourage innovative transportation projects that will meet the needs of the underserved populations identified in the Coordinated Plan.

Potential Federal Funding to Address Needs

There are twenty five federal programs identified as being significantly involved in providing transportation services to their recipients. They are:

Department of Education

- Vocational Rehabilitation Grants
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers

Department of Health and Human Services

- Grants for Supportive Services and Senior Centers
- Head Start
- Medicaid
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Community health Centers
- HIV Care Grants
- Social Services Block Grants
- State Children’s Health Insurance Program

Department of Labor

Senior Community Service Employment Program
Workforce Investment Act Adult Services Program
Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Program
Workforce Investment Act Youth Activities
Job Corps

Department of Transportation

Capital Investment Grants
Urbanized Area Formula Program
Nonurbanized Area Formula Program
Capital Assistance Program Elderly and Disabled Persons
Job Access and Reversed Commute
New Freedom Initiative
Capital and Training Assistance for Over the Road Bus Accessibility

Department of Agriculture

Food Stamp Employment and Training Program

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Community Development Block Grant Supportive Housing Program

Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Medical Care

Gaps in Public Transportation

- Limited public transit routes in the evening and weekends
- Lack of coordination among providers of transportation
- No employer support for employee transportation expenses
- Lack of reliable transportation besides public transit for social services
- Limited service area particularly for employment outside municipal limits
- Limited access to bus shelters
- Excessive travel durations for some public transit trips
- Few affordable transportation options besides public transit
- Excess demand for paratransit services
- Occasional excessive wait times for paratransit services

- No third shift public transit
- Lack of knowledge of transportation options
- No regional and limited county to county transportation services

The EMPO conducted a prioritization survey to identify the public transit-human services' needs in the community. Persons were asked to prioritize with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest.

Below are the top three priorities in the three targeted population segments:

Low Income and Unemployed

- ✚ Reliable access to transportation for human services locations such as food pantries, medical services and government services. **Average Score – 4.73**
- ✚ Expanded transportation services on weekends, including Sundays for retail and service employees to reach their place of employments. **Average Score – 4.64**
- ✚ Access to reliable transportation to place of employment. **Average Score – 4.48**

Elderly

- ✚ More affordable transportation services. **Average Score – 4.48**
- ✚ Reliable access to transportation for human services locations such as food pantries, medical services and government services. **Average Score – 4.44**
- ✚ More convenient and safer access to METS fixed route services. **Average Score – 4.40**

Individuals with Disabilities

- ✚ Reliable access to transportation for human services locations such as food pantries, medical services and government services. **Average Score - 4.56**
- ✚ Expanded demand response, paratransit service. **Average Score – 4.53**
- ✚ Coordination among transportation providers and providers of human services. **Average Score – 4.53**

In fulfillment of the requirement by the Federal Government to create a locally developed, Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan, the Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization, as the local lead transportation entity, with the assistance of local transportation and human services organizations and concerned citizens, has established the following Needs and Strategies which will be the basis for future Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317 eligible projects and allocations which must be considered to be derived from and consistent with this Coordinated Plan:

NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

Overall:

NEED: Improve coordination and efficiency among all transportation providers and providers of human services for a more comprehensive system.

STRATEGY: Form a transportation coordination group to investigate processes for improved transportation coordination, service and efficiency and to expand and improve on the current Coordinated Plan. Public transit and human service organizations must participate in this group and work as partners for it to be successful.

Explore the possibility of creating a brokerage which would combine transportation services, when possible, into a single system utilizing multiple funding sources and multiple providers. This collaboration could make more efficient use of funds and vehicles. Transportation provided could be in the form of paratransit, taxi, fuel vouchers and bus passes.

NEED: Increase the number of transportation options and the quality of transportation options for consumers of public transportation.

STRATEGY: Increase the existing public and private fleets and hire supporting staff to operate them.

Encourage transportation providers and human service providers to meet regularly to continue to improve transportation services.

Increase awareness of existing bus services by distributing bus schedules and maps to major employment sites, shopping areas and human services organizations.

Encourage human service providers and employers to offer taxi and bus vouchers.

NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

Low Income and Unemployed Needs and Strategies:

NEED: Increase transportation services for second and third shift employees and on Sundays to reach their places of employment and, after work, return home.

STRATEGY: Expand bus service hours and begin services on Sundays.

Human service agencies may establish special transportation services to high volume destinations of employment at irregular times.

NEED: Improve employer support for employee's transportation needs.

STRATEGY: Educate and encourage employers to adopt transit voucher programs and van pool programs.

NEED: Expand the level of transportation services for employment and employment related destinations outside the current service area in suburban and lower population density areas.

STRATEGY: Expand bus service to provide special transportation services to high volume destinations of employment outside current service areas in suburban and lower population density areas.

Human service agencies may establish special transportation services such as van pools, transit vouchers and shuttle services to high volume destinations of employment outside current service area in suburban and lower population density areas.

NEED: Improve access to human service organizations such as food pantries, medical services, government services.

STRATEGY: Human service agencies that serve targeted populations may collaborate in the acquisition and maintenance of new vehicles and share the vehicles with other agencies as needed.

NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

Elderly Individuals Needs and Strategies:

NEED: Shorten the waiting time and waiting lists of METS Mobility service users.

STRATEGY: Facilitate and encourage the purchase of vehicles by human services' organizations for the elderly to provide new door to door services and encourage coordination efforts by providers that serve similar (elderly) targeted populations.

NEED: Expand METS Mobility paratransit service for medical appointments.

STRATEGY: Purchase additional paratransit vehicles and hire aide workers to assist those with limited mobility.

Collaborate with medical facilities to explore ways to share cost of transportation.

NEED: More convenient bus routes and stops.

STRATEGY: Identify locations such as senior centers and senior housing to provide easier access for the elderly.

NEED: Easier and safer access to METS fixed route services.

STRATEGY: Construct or improve sidewalks to provide better access to services.

NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

Individuals with Disabilities Needs and Strategies

NEED: Lessen the waiting time and reduce the waiting list for disabled users of transportation by expanding the demand response paratransit fleet and operating staff.

STRATEGY: Facilitate and encourage the purchase of vehicles by human services' providers of the disabled population to provide new door to door services and encourage coordination efforts by providers that serve similar (disabled) targeted populations.

NEED: More convenient and safer access to METS fixed route services.

STRATEGY: Construct and/or improve sidewalks to provide better access to METS fixed route services.

Provide transportation above and beyond existing paratransit service of $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to bus stop.

NEED: Expanded METS Mobility paratransit service.

STRATEGY: Purchase additional paratransit vehicles and hire aide workers to assist those with limited mobility.